
Fwd: An Open Letter from UTLA Officers

1 message

Kate O'Brien <kobrien@newlosangeles.org>
To: Brooke Rios <brios@newlosangeles.org>

Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 3:17 PM

FYI, all of our teachers got this.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Joseph Viola** <jviola@newlosangeles.org>
Date: Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 3:04 PM
Subject: Fwd: An Open Letter from UTLA Officers
To: Kate O'Brien <kobrien@newlosangeles.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA)** <supportededucators@utla.net>
Date: Mon, Jan 7, 2019 at 11:30 AM
Subject: An Open Letter from UTLA Officers
To: <jviola@newlosangeles.org>

Monday, January 07, 2019

An Open Letter Regarding Our Bargaining with LAUSD

Dear Colleague:

Our union, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), represents over 35,000 district and charter educators in Los Angeles. As you may know, district educators began contract negotiations with LAUSD over a year ago. We entered into negotiations knowing that the future of public education is on the line. And while our hope is to get a fair settlement without a strike, we are also prepared to strike if necessary.

Our state is now 43rd in per-pupil spending and is the 48th worst in student-to-teacher ratios, at a time when economic pressure on our students and their families has never been greater. California is the fifth largest economy in the world, and the money is there to invest in our schools.

Inadequate state funding for education, coupled with declining enrollment in the LAUSD geographic area, has created a crisis. That's why we've resolved to do everything in our power to change this trajectory and call for massive reinvestments in our public school system.

With input from our members, students, their parents, and our communities, we created bargaining proposals that reflect the urgency of the moment. Our platform includes:

- reduced class sizes
- more teaching and less testing
- full-time nurses in every school and increased student access to counselors, psychologists, and other emotional support personnel
- investing in community schools
- investing in special education, early childhood education, and adult & bilingual education
- increasing charter school transparency and accountability standards, including an improved process on co-locations
- fair wages that recruit and retain the most highly qualified educators

Unfortunately, we have not found a partner in LAUSD. Currently headed by new Superintendent Austin Beutner, who comes out of a private equity background, the district seems intent on implementing an austerity agenda that aims to dismantle our public schools while LAUSD sits on \$1.8 billion in reserves. While we continue the fight to improve education funding statewide, this money can and should be invested in our schools and students.

Many of the problems that our schools face are due to an intentional and systematic campaign of divestment from our schools and the promotion of privatization to replace traditional public schools. This agenda is advanced by a wealthy corporate elite that includes Betsy DeVos, the Koch brothers, Eli Broad, the Walton family, and others.

From our work with the nearly 1,000 charter school educators who are part of UTLA, we know that many of the challenges facing LAUSD educators and students are the same challenges facing educators in charter schools. Investment in early childhood education, special education, and social-emotional support for students in the form of more counselors and wrap-around services are integral to the health of the entire school community, whether district or charter.

Meanwhile, the mission of many charter schools has drifted from teacher-driven laboratories meant to inform and improve traditional public school education to the establishment of a competing system of corporate-managed schools that too often deprive parents and educators of any real voice. The unregulated growth of charter schools has added to the economic and educational instability of existing charter and district schools. This is particularly true as declining birth rates and gentrification have meant that overall student enrollment in the city is declining. Total enrollment in district and charter schools has dropped by over 137,000 in the past 16 years, while the number of charter schools in the city has increased by over 200.[1]

The oversaturation of schools in some communities has led to under-enrollment, declining school budgets, teacher layoffs, and school closures, all of which negatively affect students and families. As the LA Times reported this past summer, a PUC charter school was forced to abruptly close its doors because of under-enrollment.

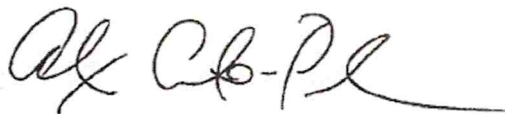
As educators, our goal is to ensure that all schools have the resources to serve *all* students. That is why UTLA is calling for an immediate cap on new charter school growth within LAUSD. Instead, we believe that our current schools, district and charter alike, should be adequately invested in and fully funded.

Only by working together can we achieve the schools LA students deserve. We know that our power to transform our schools comes from the free-sharing of best practices across district and charter schools; school decision-making that includes meaningful teacher, parent and community

participation on school boards; and fully funding our schools to give students what they need to succeed.

We invite you to stand in support of the schools our students deserve. Please [fill out this form](#) to receive updates and to stay in touch.

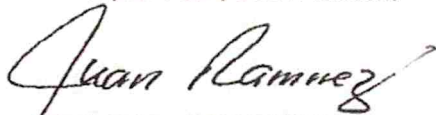
For our students and our profession,



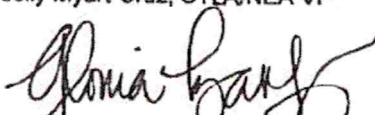
Alex Caputo-Pearl, UTLA President



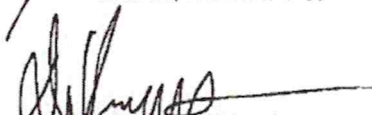
Cecily Myart-Cruz, UTLA/NEA VP



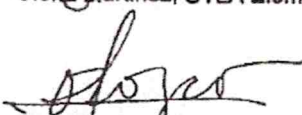
Juan Ramirez, UTLA/AFT VP



Gloria Martinez, UTLA Elementary VP



Daniel Barnhart, UTLA Secondary VP



Alex Orozco, UTLA Treasurer



Arlene Inouye, UTLA Secretary

^[1] In the 2002-2003 school year, total student enrollment in district and charter schools in the LAUSD geographic area was 746,831. In the 2018-2019 school year, it is 625,523 (Source: LAUSD Superintendent's Final Budgets 2002-3003 and 2018-2019). In the same period, the total number of charter schools in the city has increased by over 200 (Source: California Department of Education).

Sent via [ActionNetwork.org](#). To update your email address, change your name or address, or to stop receiving emails from Los Angeles Charter Schools, please [click here](#).

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Joey Viola

First Grade Teacher

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